

**Common Course Outline**  
**PALG 103**  
**Legal Research & Writing for Paralegals**  
**3 Semester Hours**

**The Community College of Baltimore County**

**Description**

**PALG 103 – 3 credits - Legal Research & Writing for Paralegals** enables students to identify legal issues and to generate a research strategy to solve them. Students learn how to locate and use primary and secondary legal sources, perform computerized research, and how to update these sources. In addition, students learn to apply their findings to hypothetical fact situations to reach legal conclusions.

**3.0 credit hours**

**Corequisites: PALG/PRLW 101 and ENGL 101**

**Overall Course Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. write a legal case brief utilizing the Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion (IRAC) method of case briefing;
2. explain the purpose of legal research and its general use;
3. demonstrate familiarity with the source, location, organization and use of various legal authorities;
4. differentiate between primary and secondary legal authorities, including state, federal and administrative law;
5. explain the application of law to facts in a fictional client scenario;
6. analyze basic legal problems by identifying and applying the appropriate legal resources;
7. explain the purpose and methods by which primary legal authority is updated and validated;
8. utilize computerized legal resources to properly update and validate primary legal authority;
9. write an inter-office memorandum analyzing a client's legal issue;
10. prepare properly drafted citations to primary and secondary legal authorities using *ALWD Citation Manual*;
11. perform legal research utilizing library resources, the Internet, and computerized legal search engines, such as Westlaw;
12. describe the purpose and role of the paralegal in the legal research process;
13. evaluate the ethical duties of a paralegal in conducting legal research;
14. distinguish between the substantive and procedural rules governing the filing of lawsuits in federal and state courts; and

15. summarize the process by which legislation is enacted at the federal and state levels.

### **Major Topics**

- I. Sources of Legal Authority
  - a. Primary Authority
  - b. Secondary Authority
- II. Citation of Legal Authority
- III. Validation of Legal Authority
  - a. Case Law
  - b. Statutory Law
- IV. Legal Analysis
- V. Computer Assisted Research
  - a. Internet Legal Research
  - b. Lexis Nexis
- VI. Legal Writing

### **Course Requirements**

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member and specific assignments and procedures for evaluating student performance will be described in the individual class syllabus, but will include the following:

1. Written case briefs for at least five cases.
2. A minimum of five written legal research assignments for library and on-line research.
3. A minimum of one written memorandum of law analyzing and applying case and/or statutory law to a fictional client scenario.
4. A minimum of two written assignments on legal citation using the *ALWD Citation Manual*.
5. A minimum of five quizzes on course material.

### **Other Course Information**

This course is a Paralegal Studies required core course for degree and certificate students in the first semester and a prerequisite to all upper level Paralegal courses. It is taught in the classroom and on-line using a variety of instructional techniques, which are intended to meet the varied learning styles of our diverse population.